

Why terrorism occurs

Returning to the basics

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20 April 2021



The early answers (19th century)

- “weak minds without education and without defense against the harmful ideas of agitators” (1882)
- results from “a confused mass of injustice and wrongdoing” (1897)
- “an international army organized to war upon society” (1909)

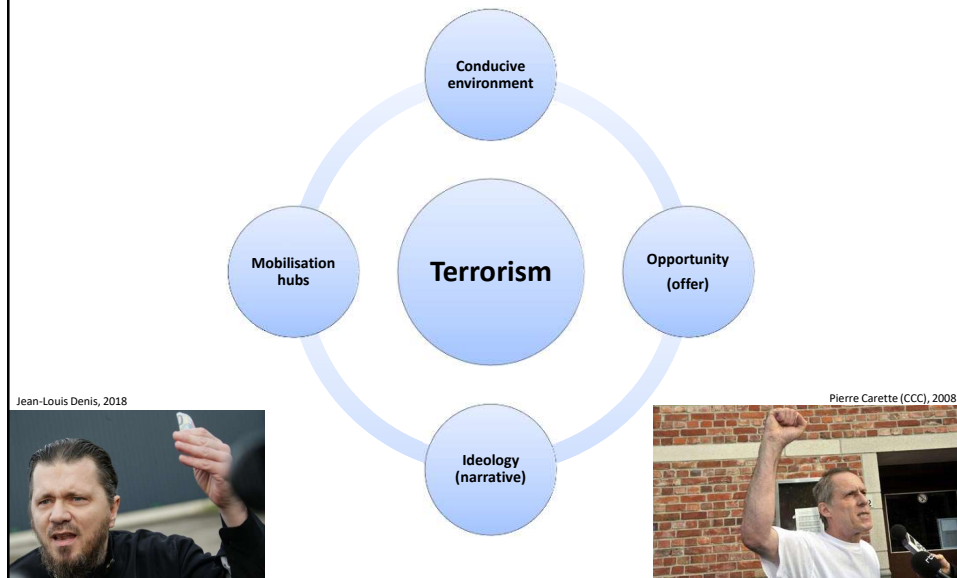
Terrorism studies (1970s-1980s)

- “Political preconditions” and “ideologies, beliefs and life-styles” of terrorists (1974)
- “Terrorism always assumes the protective colouring of certain features of the *Zeitgeist*” (1977)
- “scratching a terrorist will [not] necessarily reveal an ideologue” (1977)
- “instigating circumstances”, but never “an automatic reaction to conditions”, need to consider “instigating circumstances”, “perceptions” and “group activity, and “historical moment” (1981)
- “context is all in the study of political violence” (1986)

Radicalisation studies (2000s)

- Radicalisation is “a socialisation and mobilisation process” (2013/2018)

The emergence of terrorism



The emergence of terrorism (2)

- **Conducive environment**
 - Group-based feelings of injustice
 - Existential threat to the group
 - Us vs Them (polarisation)
- **Opportunity (offer)**
 - Triggering events
 - Mobilizing symbols ('historical moment')
 - Seized upon by self-proclaimed vanguard(s)
- **Ideology (narrative)**
 - Framing the environment
 - Articulating the dissatisfaction
 - Violence as the sole adequate response
- **Mobilisation hubs**
 - Individual trajectories

The emergence of jihadism

- **Conducive environment: 'glocal' interaction**
 - US post-Cold War triumphalism
 - 1990s *Zeitgeist*
 - “Clash of civilisations”
 - “War on Islam”
 - Diverse set of local situations of injustice, conflict and marginalisation
 - Occupation (Palestine)
 - Social and political malaise (Arab world)
 - Separatism, civil war, rebellions (Afghanistan, Chechnya, South Thailand)
 - Europe: migration & structural discriminations
 - ‘Second-class citizens’

The emergence of jihadism (2)

- **Opportunity (offer)**
 - Triggering events
 - Afghanistan (2001), Iraq (2003): the War on Islam come true
 - Mobilising symbols: “The era of Islam is near”
 - Defeat US ally by Iranian revolution (1979)
 - Defeat Red Army in Afghanistan (1987)
 - Somalia (1993)
 - 9/11: WTC, symbol of US empire
 - 2014: the Caliphate reborn
 - Al-Qaeda & ISIS: self-proclaimed revolutionary vanguards
- **Ideology**
 - Jihadism as mobilizing narrative
 - Jihadism speaks to the disenfranchised and the marginalised
 - Offering a common perspective of revolt against the powers that be
 - Jihadism islamised anti-imperialism of the left (O. Roy)

The emergence of jihadism (3)

- **Mobilisation hubs**
 - “All radicalisation is local”
 - Pre-existing kinship and friendship bonds
 - Individual trajectories

The emergence of right-wing extremism

LE NOUVEAU VISAGE DE L'EXTRÊME DROITE EN BELGIQUE

Comme ailleurs en Europe occidentale, l'idéologie d'extrême droite est également bien présente en Belgique. La VSSE a toutefois constaté une mutation profonde du milieu.

UK security and counter-terrorism

MI5 to take over in fight against rise of UK rightwing extremism

Security service to handle intelligence gathering then inform police to take action

Vikram Dodd, Police and crime commissioner

14 Jul 2019 10:14 GMT

4,833

The far right

German police arrest 12 over far-right plot to spark 'civil-war-like situation'

Prosecutors say group planned attacks on politicians, asylum-seekers and Muslims

AFP in Berlin

14 Jul 2019 10:14 GMT

Ce que révèle l'enquête sur les projets d'attentats de l'ultradroite visant des musulmans

Les préparatifs d'attaques étaient assez avancés. Les suspects envisageaient notamment d'empoisonner de la nourriture halal.

LE MONDE | 04 09 2018 à 10h30 • Mis à jour le 05 09 2018 à 07h58 | Par Elise Vincent

The Rise of Far-Right Extremism in the United States

By Seth G. Jones

NOVEMBER 2018

De golfbewegingen van rechts-extremistisch geweld in West-Europa
Aard, ernst en omvang van de rechts-extremistische gewelds dreiging in West-Europa, inclusief Nederland

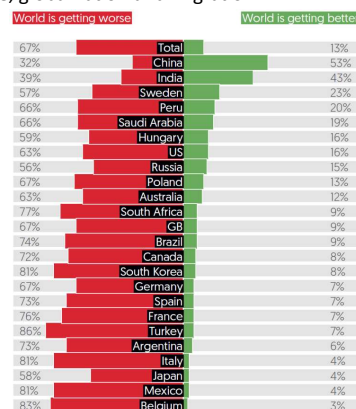
Rechts-extremisme in Nederland
Een fenomeen in beweging



The emergence of right-wing extremism (2)

• Conducive environment

- Social malaise
 - Rooted in social and economic developments since the 1980s...
 - End of Cold War, rapid technological change, globalization and migration
 - 'World is getting worse'
 - Feeling of being left behind
 - Growing inequalities and feelings of injustice
 - Scapegoating
- Existential threat
 - Migration, Muslims, multiculturalism, diversity
- 2010s *Zeitgeist*: culture wars
 - Social polarisation around identitarian themes



The emergence of right-wing extremism (3)

• Opportunity (offer)

- Triggering events
 - USA: Obama, the first Afro-American president (2009)
 - EU: electoral success European right-wing parties (2010s)...
 - ... and asylum crisis and jihadi attacks (2015-2016)

• Ideology (narrative)

- "The Great Replacement" (Islamisation of the West)
- Anti-migration
- Anti-elite

• Mobilisation hubs (EU intelligence services)

- "Fluid groups" with "growing confidence"
- "Trend to arms itself"
- "International contacts"

The New York Times

book club

November 6, 2015

Right Wing's Surge in Europe Has the Establishment Rattled

by ANDREW HOSBORN

It is also Europe's new reality. All over, established political forces are losing ground to politicians whom they seem an elite-mongering populace. In France, according to a recent opinion poll, the far-right National Front has become the country's most popular party. In other countries — Austria, Britain, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Finland and the Netherlands — disruptive-sounding groups are on a roll.

2083



A European Declaration of Independence
 Against the Great Replacement
 People's movement to stop the Great Replacement

Breivik 2011

The Great Replacement

TOWARDS A NEW SOCIETY



Christchurch 2019

WE MARCH EVER FORWARD

Quotes

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- Source: R. Coolsaet, 'When do individuals radicalise?', in Diego Muro, Tim Wilson, *Contemporary Terrorism Studies*. Oxford University Press (forthcoming)